Proper use of chemical fertilizer

†2483. SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that use of chemical fertilizers by farmers is not being done properly;

(b) if so, whether it is affecting agricultural land in the country negatively;

(c) if so, the facts thereof and whether it is required to check this negative effect without delay;

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereon;

(e) whether there is a scheme to educate farmers regarding proper usage of chemical fertilizers; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (f) It is fact that unbalanced use of fertilizers coupled with low addition of organic matter and neglect of secondary and micro nutrients over the years have resulted in deterioration of soil health in many parts of the country, particularly in intensively cultivated areas of Indo gangetic plains.

The Government of India has launched a new scheme, namely, "National Project on Management of Soil Health & Fertility" during 2008-09 to promote soil test based balanced and judicious use of fertilizers for improving soil health and its productivity. The scheme has provision for training of farmers, field demonstrations and organizing farmers' fair to promote balanced and soil test based application of fertilizers.

Import of rice

2484. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether rice is being imported;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken to boost domestic rice production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) According to the latest data provided by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Kolkata, only 9.8 tonnes of rice was imported during the year 2008-09. The reasons for import was requirement of specific varieties not usually grown domestically.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.